



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

*Maryland's Social Services Agency*



### MEDIA ADVISORY

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### **SEVERAL EASTERN SHORE FAMILIES TO BE HONORED DURING ADOPTION RECOGNITION EVENT**

**BALTIMORE** – November is National Adoption Awareness month adoptive families across Maryland will be honored at an event to be held at the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore on Saturday, November 22, 2008.

“Many of these families have added two or more children to their family,” said Brenda Donald, Secretary of the Department of Human Resources. “We are thankful to them for opening their homes to our children, and want to take this opportunity to help bring attention to the joys of growing families in this manner.”

Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester Counties, all on Maryland’s eastern shore, have each nominated a family of the year to be honored at the celebration. Five of these eight counties have met or exceeded their adoption goals for this year – finalizing a total of 56 adoptions.

Dorchester County’s Elisa Camper has adopted two biological brothers and is being honored for her commitment as a foster parent and for the work she has done to strengthen and support children and their families. Ms. Camper has been a foster parent since 2005 and adopted her second child in May of 2008.

In an effort to keep children as close as possible to their own communities and not have to go across the bridge into placement, counties on the shore often share foster parent resources. This was the case when Mr. and Mrs. Larry Adkins (who reside in Queen Anne’s County) began caring for a group of three siblings from Kent County. They became foster parents to these children in July of 2006 and finalized the adoption of all three this year.

Joanne Rabb is being honored by Wicomico County Department of Social Services as their adoptive parent of the year after she adopted a sibling group of three. Two of the children have special needs.

“Each of our adoptive families is special and the children they adopt are fortunate to be a part of their families,” Donald said. “All total, 617 adoptions were finalized this year, with 19 of our 24 counties meeting or exceeding their adoption goals. We are happy to have had this increase in adoptions, but

- Martin O’Malley, Governor
- Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
- Brenda Donald, Secretary

also recognize that each of the 617 total adoptions represent a positive change in the individual life of a child.”

There were 563 children adopted across Maryland in fiscal year 2007.

Members of the media are asked to contact the Department of Human Resources for additional information on adoption activities in counties across the state.

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The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state’s social service provider serving 500,000 people in need each year. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children and temporary cash, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also provides programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is the fourth largest state agency.